

School Re-Opening Phase 2:  
Options for Expanding In-Person Learning When  
Health Data Supports Physically Being in Buildings

Presentation to the Lowell School Committee  
November 12, 2020

# Agenda

1. Guiding Principles
2. Consultation with Local Health Experts
3. Summary of Re-Opening Phase 1 Model
4. Lessons Learned from Phase 1
5. Instructional Models Implemented in Other Districts
6. Updated Information on Health and Safety Since Adoption of Phase 1 Plan
7. Challenges and Opportunities of Each Instructional Model for Phase 2
8. Next Steps

# Guiding Principles

*\*\*Page 7 of School Re-Opening Plan, Adopted 8/5/20*

1. Our decisions will be guided by the latest health data and input from public health experts. We will be monitoring the rate of positive cases here in Lowell and statewide.
2. We will maximize options for families and offer a remote learning option, as well as an in-person option as long as health data continue to support physically being in our buildings.
3. We make a commitment to equity, with the belief that a public education is a fundamental civil right. Families and students who have historically been underserved have had a voice in the planning process and will have their needs met.

# Consultation with Health Experts

## 11/2 SC policy recommendation

Three weeks of case rate data will be reviewed as well as the community-wide spread to determine when the District should first go back to 25% or greater in-person learning, after consultation with the Health Department and/or Board of Health

## Lowell COVID-19 positivity rate and incidence status

[illegible][illegible]

***\*Local health data must improve for more students to physically be in buildings beyond the <500 students enrolled in substantially separate special education programming***

***\*\*A full return to phase 1, approx. 25% in-person capacity is planned (when supported by the local health data) prior to implementation of phase 2 expansion***

# Lowell Public Schools

## COVID-19 Data

(9/1/20 - 11/10/20)

	COVID Positive (DESE)	# Quarantined school related	#Quarantined non-school related
Staff:	7	37	17
Students:	7	77	6
Other:	2	4	0
Total:	16	118	23

# Summary of Re-Opening Phase 1 Model



## Maximizing Options for Families

*A Safe School Reopening Plan for Students within the Context of COVID-19*

*Fall 2020 • Approved August 5, 2020*



- An option for families of either full-time, remote learning or full-time, in-person learning to start the school year.
  - Approximately 25% in-person and 75% remote learners district-wide with specific enrollment proportions varying by grade level and campus
  - Over 3,000 full-time, in-person seats available based on a prioritized lottery-based enrollment system
- In-person class sizes based of six feet of distancing among all students at all times.
- Teachers and students both provided with the option to apply for an in-person position/seat with neither teachers nor students compelled to be in-person by policy
- Policy adjustments to kindergarten assignments and transportation access to minimize bus riders and further mitigate viral spread.
- Classroom use limited to only those with working windows and air purifiers
- Remote and In-person student schedules that mirrored one another to allow for maximum continuity when shifting among models based on health protocols

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- In-person learning all time
- Teachers in-person in-person
- Policy to minimize bus riders and further mitigate viral spread.
- Classroom use limited to only those with working windows and air purifiers
- Remote and In-person student schedules that mirrored one another to allow for maximum continuity when shifting among models based on health protocols

***“Following the strictest safety protocols based on guidance from the most reputable experts”***

# Summary of Re-Opening Phase 1 Model

***As the time away from school extends, the concerns raised most notably by the American Academy of Pediatrics of the social and psychological well-being of remote learners due to isolation and lack of access to in-school services continue to increase in severity***

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***Following the strictest safety protocols based on guidance from the most reputable experts"***

size bus riders to help mitigate viral spread.

***The health and safety of both in-person and remote learners must continue to be balanced and weighed equitably in all phase 2 decisions***



# Lessons Learned from Phase 1

- Students learn best in school.
- Consistent models (remote, hybrid, in-person) are essential for our students, families, and staff and changes to models can create significant staffing challenges, particularly at the middle and high school levels.
- Student attendance is difficult to monitor and maintain in a full remote situation.
- Medical guidance and our own experiences with students and families suggest that we need in-person settings to improve mental health and social emotional learning (American Academy of Pediatrics).
- Pre-literacy skill gaps for our youngest learners are difficult to teach remotely.
- Validity and reliability of assessment data isn't as strong remotely.
- Many of the instructional strategies and techniques that we know are most effective and engaging are difficult to employ remotely.

# Instructional Models Implemented in Other Districts



Shana V  
@Shana

## GEORGIA

I'm supposed to teach 19 students in person in a computer lab and the remaining 12 students virtually at the same time behind this starting tomorrow. 🙄

What do you notice?

What do you wonder?



## CALIFORNIA



Luis Alejo @Supervisor... · 11h

2 of our children trying to get Wi-Fi for their classes outside a Taco Bell in East Salinas! We must do better & solve this digital divide once & for all for all California students

CALIFORNIA NEEDS A UNIVERSAL BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE BOND FOR OUR STUDENTS  
[link.medium.com/7lr6Dyo5f9](https://link.medium.com/7lr6Dyo5f9)

[Show this thread](#)



## MASSACHUSETTS LARGE URBANS

### Lawrence

District-wide full remote since the start of the school year

### Worcester

District-wide full remote since the start of the school year

### Brockton

District-wide full remote since the start of the school year

## NEIGHBORING SMALLER DISTRICTS

### Chelmsford

Wednesdays all remote for all

Monday/Tuesday Cohort and Thursday/Friday Cohort

In person days- in school for 4 hours, times vary based on grade level

70% hybrid, 30% full remote

### Haverhill

Wednesdays all remote for all

Monday/Tuesday Cohort and Thursday/Friday Cohort

Special Education Cohort goes 4 days (not Wednesdays)

In person days - in school full school day (including lunch)

Teacher is teaching live for both in person students and at home students

### Methuen

Wednesdays all remote for all

K-4 & Grade 9 are Hybrid (Monday/Tuesday or Thursday/Friday)

All remote at Middle now, expected to begin Nov. 2nd - grades 5, 8, 12 to return and 2 weeks later, 6, 7, 10, 11 for hybrid model

Teacher is teaching live for both in person students and at home students

30% chose full remote

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***Most MA districts are implementing a hybrid model with teachers teaching both remote learners and in-person learners simultaneously. While this model was not included in our phase 1 design, simultaneous teaching will need to be reconsidered as part of phase 2 in order to expand in-person opportunities without disrupting class rosters and student-teacher relationships***

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## Updated Information on Health and Safety since Adoption of Phase 1 Plan

1. Schools have not been found to be a cause of widespread transmission
  - 1.1. “Closing schools in the spring was a bad idea.” -Governor Charlie Baker, 11/2/2020
2. Social distancing standards ranging between 3 and 6 feet have been used by schools in MA and across the country and the variation in distance has not been found to affect viral spread among students or staff (DESE conference call, 11/2/20)
3. DESE no longer recommends remote learning as a result of risk status on the Commonwealth’s COVID-19 dashboard (DESE e-mail communication, 10/22/20)
4. Increases in COVID-19 transmission in MA since schools reopened in September have resulted largely from social gatherings in which individuals did not adhere to risk mitigation protocols (11/2/20 Governor Baker Press Conference)
5. American Academy of Pediatrics continues to “strongly advocate...that all policy considerations...should start with a goal of having students physically present in school” (AAP school re-opening guidance)

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## TYPICAL MINIMUM 3' DISTANCING CLASSROOM 24 – POTENTIAL STUDENT SEAT MODEL



**In this case we are using 48" spacing between center of student seats to the front, sides and back of each desk to maximize distancing and maintain 24-Students in this classroom**



## TYPICAL 6'(OR GREATER) DISTANCING CLASSROOM 12 – POTENTIAL STUDENT SEAT MODEL



- In this case we are using 96" spacing between center of student seats to the front, sides and back of each desk to maximize distancing and maintain 12-Students in this classroom
- Please take note – Desks marked with a RED "X" are not in use, they are place holders for distancing and storage.

## **BAILEY SCHOOL**

**2020/2021 Enrollment – 464**

**During 25% Model – 340 Remote, 124 In-Person**

**Total Classroom Area – 18,000 Sq./Ft**

**25 Classrooms with 24 Students = 600 Potential Seats**

**25 Classrooms with 12 Students = 300 Potential Seats**

**6 additional break out spaces**

## **REILLY SCHOOL**

**2020/2021 Enrollment – 451**

**During 25% Model – 355 Remote, 96 In-Person**

**Total Classroom Area – 27,400 Sq./Ft**

**28 Classrooms with 24 Student = 672 Potential Seats**

**28 Classrooms with 12 Students = 336 Potential Seats**

**7 additional break out spaces**



## **SULLIVAN SCHOOL**

**2020/2021 Enrollment – 639**

**During 25% Model – 502 Remote, 137 In-Person**

**Total Classroom Area – 31,500 Sq./Ft**

**28 Classrooms with 24 Students = 672 Potential Seats**

**28 Classrooms with 12 Students = 336 Potential Seats**

**14 additional break out spaces**

## **STEM ACADEMY**

**2020/2021 Enrollment – 858**

**During 25% Model – 682 Remote, 176 In-Person**

**Total Classroom Area – 31,950 Sq./Ft**

**30 Classrooms with 24 students = 720 Potential Seats**

**30 Classrooms with 12 students = 360 Potential Seats**

**10 additional break out spaces**

# WASHINGTON SCHOOL

2020/2021 Enrollment – 241

During 25% Model – 121 Remote, 120 In-Person

Total Classroom Area – 12,500 Sq./Ft

15 Classrooms with 24 students = 360 Potential Seats

15 Classrooms with 12 students = 180 Potential Seats

10 additional break out spaces

- In each option (3' & 6+') we maintain 72" Spacing between All Faculty and Student Desks



# Challenges and Opportunities of Each Instructional Model for Phase 2

## Full In-Person (expand full-time seats beyond the 25% phase 1 capacity limit)

	Opportunities	Challenges
Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Full use of instructional strategies and techniques</li><li>• Valid and reliable data collection</li><li>• Materials are fully available</li><li>• Closer connection between staff and students</li><li>• More traditional class sizes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In-person substitutes/coverage for staff with medical exemptions</li><li>• No sharing of resources and materials (Students need to return items loaned out at the beginning of the year.)</li><li>• Scheduling students to minimize the need to travel between classes/buildings</li><li>• Keeping everyone social distanced and compliant with wearing masks and social distancing</li><li>• Re-rostering of students in order to level classroom enrollments</li><li>• Challenge to safely and efficiently provide breakfast/h lunch to students</li><li>• <b>High school rostering and staff constraints may limit the viability of increased full-time seats at Lowell High School as it could cause significant disruption to student course schedules and could jeopardize pathways to graduation</b></li></ul>
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Return to typical operational structures (rosters, class assignments, schedules)</li><li>• Cleaning Schedules</li><li>• Teachers have adapted and are successful with remote learning</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Social distancing standards (i.e. 6 feet) would most likely need to be re-assessed due to space constraints</b></li><li>• Access to transportation while adhering to social distancing requirements</li><li>• Using rooms without windows with air purifiers</li><li>• Social distancing requirements for meals and mask breaks</li><li>• Limitations with technology and access for families</li><li>• Still issues with access to technology and reliable Wifi. Still concerns about cyber security</li></ul>
Family Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attendance is objective and not internet-dependent.</li><li>• Meals are more easily available</li><li>• Engage in remote/virtual - can be flexible with times and ways to connect</li><li>• Students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Orienting families to health protocols</li><li>• Two-way communication regarding health</li></ul>

# High School Scheduling Considerations

- Various college/career pathways with specific electives
- Wide variation in student schedules, (early college, AP, college prep, ELL, SWDs, repeater sections) especially in grades 10-12
- Dual enrollment/advanced courses
- Latin Lyceum
- Teacher certifications

**High school scheduling is unique and has multiple variables that must be carefully weighed within the context of the COVID models.**



**Lowell High School  
2020 - 2021  
Pathways**

# Challenges and Opportunities of Each Instructional Model for Phase 2

## Full Remote (continuation of phase 1, maintaining only 25% in-person capacity limit)

	Opportunities	Challenges
Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expansive use of technology to incorporate into our regular practice</li><li>• Develop independence in learning</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implementing differentiated, effective strategies with students, especially early childhood</li><li>• Ongoing PD needs regarding instructional platforms for staff</li><li>• Validity or reliability of student data</li><li>• Student access to essential materials</li><li>• Isolation, Zoom Fatigue, 7 period day (hs), ensuring engagement in remote settings. Students not engaging and the difficulty of reaching out to them in a virtual setting</li></ul>
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Easier to maintain cleaning schedules</li><li>• Students/teachers have adapted and some are successful with remote learning</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reliability of internet and technology at home</li><li>• Access to technology, reliable Wifi, still concerns about cyber security</li></ul>
Family Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Health and safety concerns are met</li><li>• Communication systems (Smore, REMIND, Class Dojo, Blackboard calls and emails, Talking Points)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attendance throughout the day is harder to verify and track</li><li>• Meals must be picked up</li><li>• Orienting families with technology and instructional platforms</li></ul>

# Challenges and Opportunities of Each Instructional Model for Phase 2

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	Opportunities	Challenges
Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expansive use of technology to incorporate into our regular practice</li> <li>• Develop independence in learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing differentiated, effective strategies with students, especially early childhood</li> <li>• Ongoing PD needs regarding instructional platforms</li> </ul>
	<p><b><i>The Governor opined and DESE affirmed on 11/6/20 that....</i></b></p> <p><b><i>1. Districts must work towards continuously increasing in-person opportunities if health data allows in-person learning, and</i></b></p> <p><b><i>2. Students cannot be assigned to full-time remote learning unless it is their choice due to family health concerns or required by prevailing health conditions in the school or community</i></b></p>	
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>ensuring not engaging a virtual</p> <p>me concerns</p>
Family Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and safety concerns are met.</li> <li>• Communication systems (Smore, REMIND, Class Dojo, Blackboard calls and emails, Talking Points)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance throughout the day is harder to verify and track.</li> <li>• Meals must be picked up.</li> <li>• Orienting families with technology and instructional platforms</li> </ul>

# Challenges and Opportunities of Each Instructional Model for Phase 2 Hybrid/Alternating Cohorts

(establish a part-time, in-person cohort in addition to the phase 1 full-time, in-person cohort)

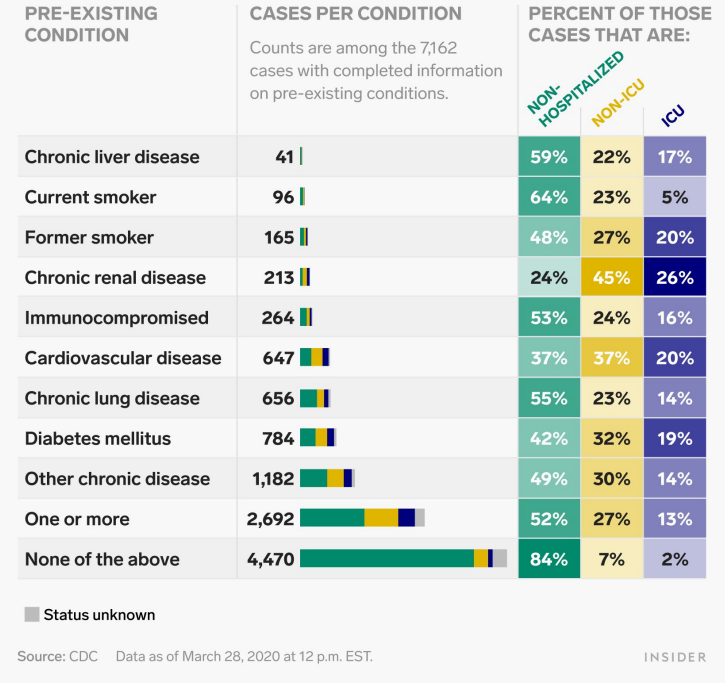
	Opportunities	Challenges
Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every student has the opportunity to have some in-person time every week</li> <li>• Flipped classroom model works effectively</li> <li>• Consistent access to materials</li> <li>• Data collection</li> <li>• Students have a choice to remain in remote or to elect to come in person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PD around flipped classrooms</li> <li>• Staffing challenges to maintain both in-person and remote teaching models (requires teachers to teach both in-person and remote student simultaneously)</li> <li>• Clear messaging and expectations</li> </ul>
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleaning schedules/Deep cleaning between cohorts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reliability of internet and technology at home</li> <li>• Child care issues for staff</li> <li>• <b>More students in buildings create more challenges for maintaining a 6-foot social distancing standard</b></li> <li>• Ability to safely and efficiently provide lunch</li> <li>• Ensuring that sanitizing and cleaning are thorough between groups in the building</li> </ul>
Family Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meals can go home with students for remote days</li> <li>• Communication systems (Smore, REMIND, Class Dojo, Blackboard calls and emails, Talking Points)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orient families to split schedules</li> <li>• Child care for split schedule</li> </ul>

# Staff with Medical Exceptions for Remote Work

- 75 years old
- pregnant
- cancer
- chronic kidney disease
- COPD
- Immunocompromised state from solid organ transplant
- obesity with BMI of 30 or higher
- Serious Heart Conditions
- sickle cell disease
- Type 2 diabetes mellitus

It is estimated that about 150-200 LPS teachers will qualify for a medical exception based upon medically documented conditions which would require remote accommodations

## COVID-19 cases based on pre-existing conditions





# Next Steps

- Continue to collaborate with union partners on relevant provisions of MOAs
- Gather additional family input through updated parent surveys
- Finalize cost analysis of additional PPE and staffing requirements, if any, of each phase 2 option
- Collaborate with transportation providers on bus routes and needs for each phase 2 option with relevant updates, if any, to SC policy
- Continue to assess the feasibility and impact of each option for the phase 2 implementation timeline, considering health data and considering meaningful breaks in the school calendar:
  - Dec 1, end of certain provisions of MOA
  - Dec 31, flu vaccine compliance deadline
  - Jan 4, return from winter break
  - Feb 2, end of 1st semester for secondary schools
- Continue to gather public feedback and guidance from SC
- Communicate regular updates to families and staff